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European Immigrants in the American West: Community Histories

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European Immigrants in the American West: Community Histories, edited by Frederick C. Luebke. *Historians of the Frontier and American West*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, in cooperation with the University of New Mexico Center for the American West, 1998. xix, 198 pp. Tables, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY PHILIP E. WEBBER, CENTRAL COLLEGE

The papers in this volume are drawn from, or based on, publications of the past twenty years. The editor, Frederick C. Luebke, provides useful background information on Europeans immigrants on the frontier, but his overriding aim is to "stimulate students, both graduate and undergraduate, to pursue ethnic community histories" (xvii). Indeed, this collection of essays would serve better as a source of methodological models for students than as a source of specialized information.

Henry Warner Bowden presents a reasonably complete yet succinct outline of spiritual and moral values espoused by Pueblos and Spanish missionaries, explaining how these competing worldviews affected the behavior of southwestern Indians. This essay is wonderfully free of attempts to tally up right and wrong attitudes or actions on the part of two cultures in contact.

Robert C. Ostergren offers a study in historical cultural geography, drawn from individual biographies of Swedes from three areas in their European homeland who settled in Dakota Territory. Rather than replicating European social concentrations, these Swedes chose where to settle based on religious preferences. Of interest to readers of this journal are the data on initial stops throughout the upper Midwest during the trek to Dakota Territory.

Dean L. May traces the fortunes of English converts to Mormonism who settled in Alpine, Utah, and contrasts these with those of two nonimmigrant rural societies. In Alpine, it is not the common culture of national origin, but rather of faith that unites members of an immigrant community with distinct social patterns, agricultural practices, and family structures.

By contrast, in the first of his two contributions on the Irish miners of Butte, Montana, David M. Emmons explains in detail how it was precisely networks of family and friendship that enabled immigrants to address the needs of physical welfare in a new environment. This essay also makes the point quite clearly that family ties were not only preserved in the new homeland, but indeed strengthened, by bringing as many members of the kinship circle as possible to America.

In his essay on Italians in San Francisco, Dino Cinel explains the circumstances of urban geography and economic reality that contrib-

uted to the formation of three settlements, each concentrated within the enclave itself yet dispersed throughout the city. As a result, the ethnic community displayed simultaneously both a high degree of cultural retention, and also fairly pervasive contact with American social patterns.

William Toll's study of Jews in Portland, Oregon, shows how one group's desire to maintain special identification was fostered by organizations emphasizing not only religious but also social and charitable activities. He pays special attention to the role of women in the Portland Jewish community.

In his second essay, David M. Emmons tells how organizations in the Irish miners' community in Butte assumed functions that one might associate under other circumstances with labor unions. At the end of the essay, Emmons notes that labor conditions during this period were such that even enlisting in the armed services during wartime seemed preferable to facing the hazards of a miner's life.

Anna Zellick's article on South Slavic immigrants in Montana merits attention as a methodological model. Because the study is based on recollections, it offers insights into historical events and also into the significance attributed to those events by the individuals who experienced them.

Dino Cinel's second contribution studies geographic mobility by second-generation Italians in the San Francisco Bay area. The author relates patterns of mobility to a variety of personal and social variables.

Carol K. Coburn looks at the networks of association of four generations of women in the German Lutheran community of Block, Kansas. One might well recommend this essay to students who, like Block, wish to study their own communities of origin with the advantage of access to the community yet also with scholarly rigor.

Josef J. Barton compares Czech farmers and Mexican field workers in South Texas, 1880-1930. Especially interesting are the contrasts arising from Czech dependence on ties across generational lines, and Mexican reliance on lateral ties or a concentric order of alliances.

Rather than study two ethnic cultures in one setting, Royden K. Loewen studies the *Kleine Gemeinde* Mennonites in two locations. This is an intriguing investigation into a group that sought to maintain a conservative stance, in one instance in a rural setting, and in another instance in a community formed around a railroad town of a decidedly secular cast.

All in all, the editor achieves the stated goal of the volume admirably well.

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